

The SL Arts and Life Magazine

ReZ

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Marc Ezra
with
Traci Nubalo

A Meeting
in
Meatspace

Poetry
by
Stosh
Quartz

Dear
Sophie
fiction





Editor's Note november

Deningun Parte:Editor

Dear Readers,

Writing this, I feel like the cat that ate the canary, because music writer Traci Nubalo has joined rez! Many of you will be familiar with Traci's writing, and those of you who are not, let me tell you that you are in for a treat. Traci has a wonderful ability to find major new talent on the SL music scene, take you into their world, and highlight the things that drive their music. Reading her pieces, I always get the feeling of knowing someone well, even if I've never met them before. For her debut in rez, Traci features the up and coming singer-songwriter and guitarist, Marc Ezra. Staying on the subject of music, I venture outside the realm of rock/pop and the singer-songwriters that Traci covers and made a visit to pianist Kyle Bronsdon's Meatspace Lounge to get lost in music that is too bluesy for jazz, and too jazzy for blues. The final contribution on the subject of the arts for this month is Cat Boccaccio's Questionnaire. This month she posed her 14 leading questions to artist Sledge Roffo.

Over the last few weeks, opinions have run wild at rez. In the wake of breast cancer awareness month, we had quite a few controversial discussions about what cancer might mean to someone's life and how to deal with it. As a result, Jullianna Juliesse and I each felt moved to share our perspectives on cancer - and we wound up with a study in contrasts. In my Plan B column, I am deliberate and rational, and Ju-

lie's essay on pixel boobs is highly emotional. Between the two of us, maybe we came up with something like a holistic perspective on cancer. We dedicate these two pieces to the memory of our late friend, brinda Allen. Julie also wrote her usual column, The Girl Opines, and this time she examines what alts mean to our SL experience.

If you've ever seen an issue of rez before, you are familiar with the photography of Jami Mills, even if you may not be aware of it. She has contributed a large share of the photos in every issue we have published, and a lot of the look and feel of rez is due to her way of visualizing SL. But this month, Jami has ventured into a new realm and, on top of her photography, has contributed the short story Dear Sophie. And finally we found two poems for you: Let Me Die... and Unwrap Me, both by Stosh Quartz. Enjoy!

Deningun Parte

Editor-in-Chief





A Meeting in Meatspace

by Deningun Parte

The idea behind all social networking is that we all know someone who knows someone. And if we talk to the right people and then make the right connections, interesting things may happen. Many of us try to put that into practice, to reach whatever goals we set for ourselves. I just never thought the idea might apply to music I like. After all, I crave music of obscure dead people. In RL I have come within one degree of separation from Leadbelly, Brownie McGhee, and Sonny Terry. What good does it do me, really? I'll not sit in Greenwich Village tapping my feet as they play. Sometimes, the unexpected turns out to be more interesting.

Some time ago, my gallery hosted an exhibit by Callipygian Christensen, who brought up the idea

of having a live musician at the opening. Callipygian and I both love the blues, so I jumped at the chance. When the day came, a grand piano materialized in the gallery and an unassuming gentleman asked to be put on stream. I noted the name, Kyle Bronsdon (user name kyle.beltran) and went about preparing for the opening. A few minutes later my jaw dropped. Here was a wonderful piano player with a pleasant, very personal singing voice and a relaxed, comfortable sense of humor. I was reminded of the Fats Waller video clips that cost me about a week's worth of RL productivity a few years ago. But this was not one of my dead black idols. This was a simulcast from a garage in Tucson, made before cooking dinner!

Before I knew it, I had joined the group Meatspace, and soon I was attending the weekly Tuesday night shows at the Meatspace Lounge, Kyle's very own streamline moderne piano bar. It was like stepping back in time, and I pleasantly lost myself in the music there.

If only I could figure out the significance of the name "Meatspace"! It proved a constant counterpoint, especially when getting group messages, because

the group logo is a raw steak. I eventually did have to ask Kyle, and the answer he gave illuminated his perception of his presence in SL. It turns out "meatspace" is a term from cyberpunk literature, meant as a contrast to cyberspace. And Kyle, who sees his art as almost entirely physical, intended it to symbolize the bridge back from cyberspace to meatspace. As a result, we get some real, honest to God good live music!



Photos by Jami Mills



That music is hard to describe - I mentioned Fats Waller earlier, but Kyle cites Tom Waits as one of his main influences, and then Duke Ellington and Bob Dylan. He even lists the late SL DJ Brother Bear among his influences. And while sources are certainly diverse, what we get to hear is very cohesive and recognizable. That is not to say Kyle rests on his laurels and is satisfied with what he has achieved musically. He holds a degree in Music

Sound Engineering and he is trained as a drummer. He claims to be too jazzy for blues fans, too bluesy for the jazzers and not skilled enough on the piano for either. Had he not said, that would never have occurred to me. And so, he is looking to future projects with more emphasis on the piano, and with the help of some musician friends from his home in Tucson.

This brings me to the RL components of Kyle's music. His albums are available through his website kylebronsdon.com, and he has a presence on Facebook and twitter as well. It pays off to keep an eye out for his announcements, because many of his live shows from venues in Tucson are streamed into his Meatspace Lounge in SL.

Finally, there is meatspace radio which plays Kyle's music 24/7, available via a player on kylebronsdon.com. Have a steak and keep your ears open. I was one degree of separation away from Meatspace and got lucky. What will you find?





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Cat Questionnaire: **Sledge Roffo**

Cat Boccaccio:Interrogator

This time, Sledge Roffo dares to answer Cat's 14 leading questions.

SL age: 4-1/2 years

SL activity: Artist

RL location: West Coast, USA

In-your-own-words bio: In RL, I'm a Construction Project Manager and under a lot of stress. I'm a problem-solver but sometimes the problems outweigh the benefits of making something out of nothing. In SL, I get to dabble in my real passion -- art! I have a BFA in Fine Arts, know a little about art history and have my favorite periods that influence my artwork. In RL, I like to hike, camp, and fish in the summertime. In the wintertime, I'm at my computer or watching all the new TV shows. So...here I am in front of the computer in my room with the door closed makingart.

1. What in SL has brought you the most happiness?

Developing relationships with people without the crap of daily life is truly unique and pleasurable. I get to show off my typing skills too!

2. What has given you the most sadness?

Those same relationships are transient. Friends log off one night



and you might never get to talk to them again and you don't know where they went, or why.

3. How would you describe your home in SL?

It's just for two. It's simple – a bed, a rug, and a video screen. There is always a campfire burning outside on the sand and there's a swimming pool but nobody uses it. It's a two-story building but there are no stairs. We never eat dinner at home. There's no place to cook. I never sleep there.

4. Who in SL do you admire most?

Glyph Graves. I'm a big fan.

5. What character trait do you have in SL that is furthest from your RL personality?

I probably would have to say wearing the same clothes day after day is something I am comfortable doing only in SL.

6. Which character trait did you leave behind in RL?

I'm a hot head in RL. I hope I left that behind.

7. What is your weakness when it comes to spending your Linden dollars?

Art and Adult stuff.

8. What is your favorite place in Second Life, and why?

At home in the tub. It's made for two.

9. What scares you the most in (or about) Second Life?

Losing my inventory.

10. What is your secret pleasure in SL?

Camming.

11. What would it take to drive you out of Second Life?

LAG.

12. What one word would you use to describe the art community in SL?

Growing – adding more and more RL art

13. What are you most proud of in SL?

My artwork.

14. If you built a sim from scratch with unlimited resources, what would it be called?

Primscape Dreams.

Visit Sledge's award-winning "Primscape Dreams":
<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Chronocules/211/161/1952>

Sledge's blog:
<http://makingartinsecondlife.blogspot.com>



Photography

Jami

Mills





A woman with short brown hair, wearing sunglasses and a red jacket, is sitting in a car at night. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark, suggesting it's nighttime.

Marc Ezra

Get Off My Cloud

by Tracy Nubalo

photos by Jami Mills

So there I was - minding my own business.

Well, I was actually at a large gathering helping to celebrate the rez day for my friend and stellar SL musician, Pilgrim75 Swashbuckler (Pete Mroz). But I was minding my own business (MMOB).

Well, except that as I stood near the stage watching Pete's set I kept noticing that there was a not-fully-rezzed avatar standing to my left. He was a cloud is the best way I can say it.

So there I was, back to MMOB and enjoying the music. Then the cloud IMs me.

Cloud: hello

Me (MMOB): ummm hello

Cloud: enjoying the music?

Me (still trying to MMOB, but being forced now to look at

the cloud's profile which tells me he's a SL musician): yes, I love Pete's music.

Cloud: I've heard him twice before. I really like his vocals.

Me (thinking, "Oh god...he wants me to write an article about him"): yes, I like his vocals too.

We chat amiably for a little while until I realize that he actually doesn't know that I'm a SL music journalist. Now I'm thinking: "Oh, god...he's hitting on me."

Me: ummm dude...you're a cloud.

Cloud: yeah I know.

Me: just checking.

Cloud: I tried rezzing twice.

And on it went - maybe the sweetest conversation I have had with a stranger in SL in

like, forever.

To make a long story not so long, I found out that the cloud's name is Marc Ezra and that he is managed by my friend Alexxis Lefavre (who also co-manages Pete Mroz). Marc had an SL gig the following day and I headed over there, really not expecting much musically from the cloud-dude.

Was I ever surprised!

Marc Ezra is the real deal. Let's just put that on the table right away. He can sing; he's a very accomplished guitarist; he writes excellent original songs; and he understands how all of this goes together to create a live music experience that's both exhilarating and entertaining. I'll go on record now as saying that the 27 year-old Southern California resident is one of my current favorites and one of the brightest new SL musicians to

come onto the scene in quite some time.

I was so impressed that we quickly made plans for me to attend a Halloweenish live show at Paisley Park, a killer SL music venue owned by Alexxis. Rez Magazine sent me to the concert on my first assignment for this great publication. I took with me the amazing SL photographer, Jami Mills, who has shot most of the concerts I have covered in recent months. She and her awesome and lovely assistant Friday Blaisdale also attended the interview with Marc at Paisley Park a couple of nights later.



Traci Nubalo: Marc, many of my readers are into tech stuff. Are you up for some tech talk first?

Marc Ezra: Sure

TN: What guitar(s) do you play in SL?

ME: I play a Taylor 814CE

TN: Acoustic-electric?

ME: Yes.

TN: Do you mic it? Or go straight into the board? Or both?

ME: Everything goes into a mixer, then is fed into a 2-channel USB interface.

TN: Do you use any effects?

ME: Currently I use only reverb, but I plan on using more and broaden out.

TN: Awesome. What vocal mic are you using?

ME: The Audix OM2. It's a dynamic mic.

TN: Marc, your sound is clear and direct. Can you tell us how you broadcast to SL? Take me and my readers into your studio.

ME: I broadcast from my Butt.

TN: Uh huh.

ME: From my Butt broadcaster that is. My mix is sent through a mixer, through an interface, and into the Butt broadcaster which connects my stream to SL. I have no idea why they named it that.

TN: I see. Let's talk about your writing process a little.

ME: Sure.

TN: Words? Music? Which comes first?

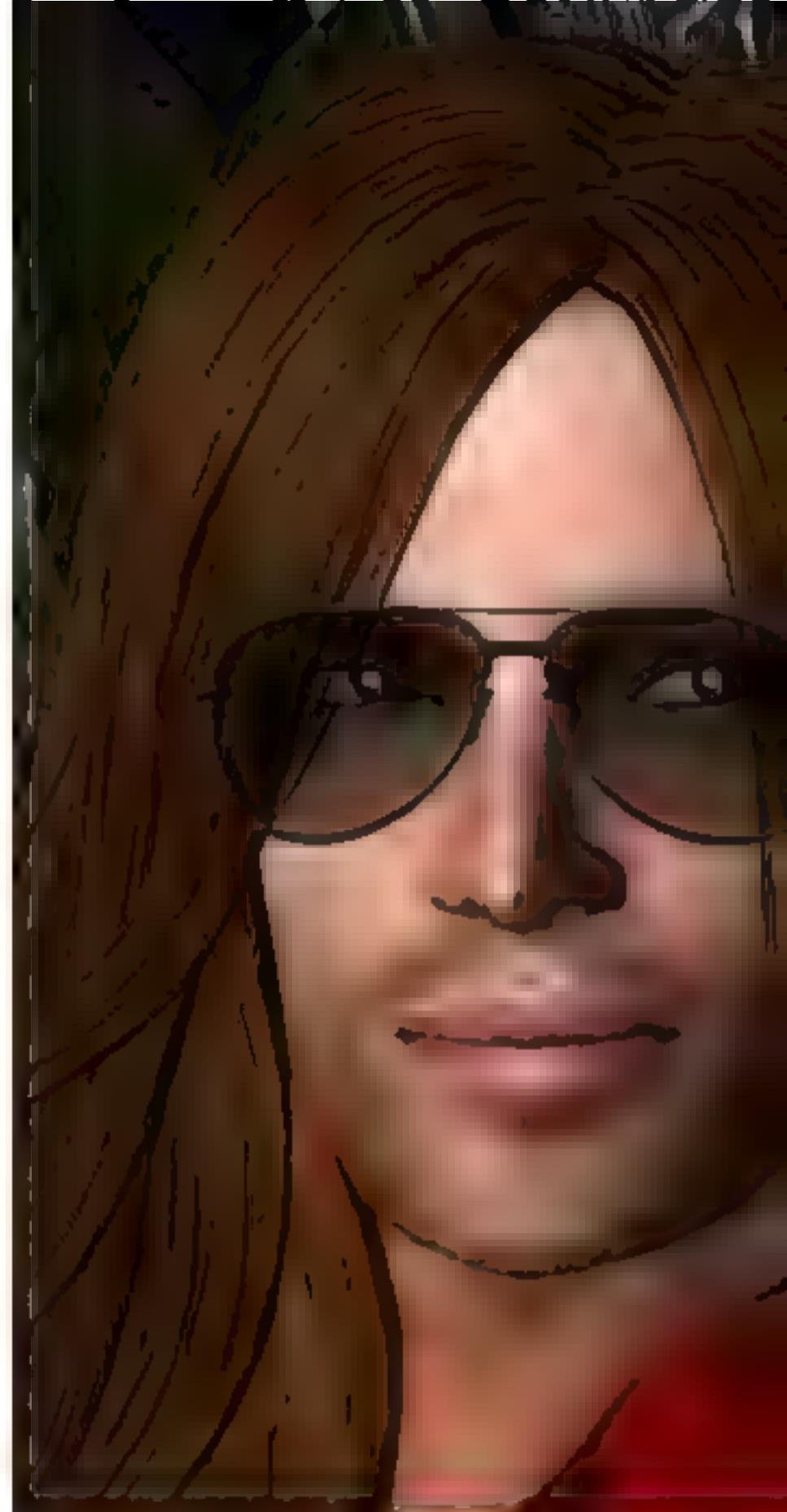
ME: Definitely the music. I speak through my music. Words simply allow me to let you understand what I'm feeling

TN: Gotcha. Marc, you have some stunning guitar work on some of your originals. Do you begin with a riff?

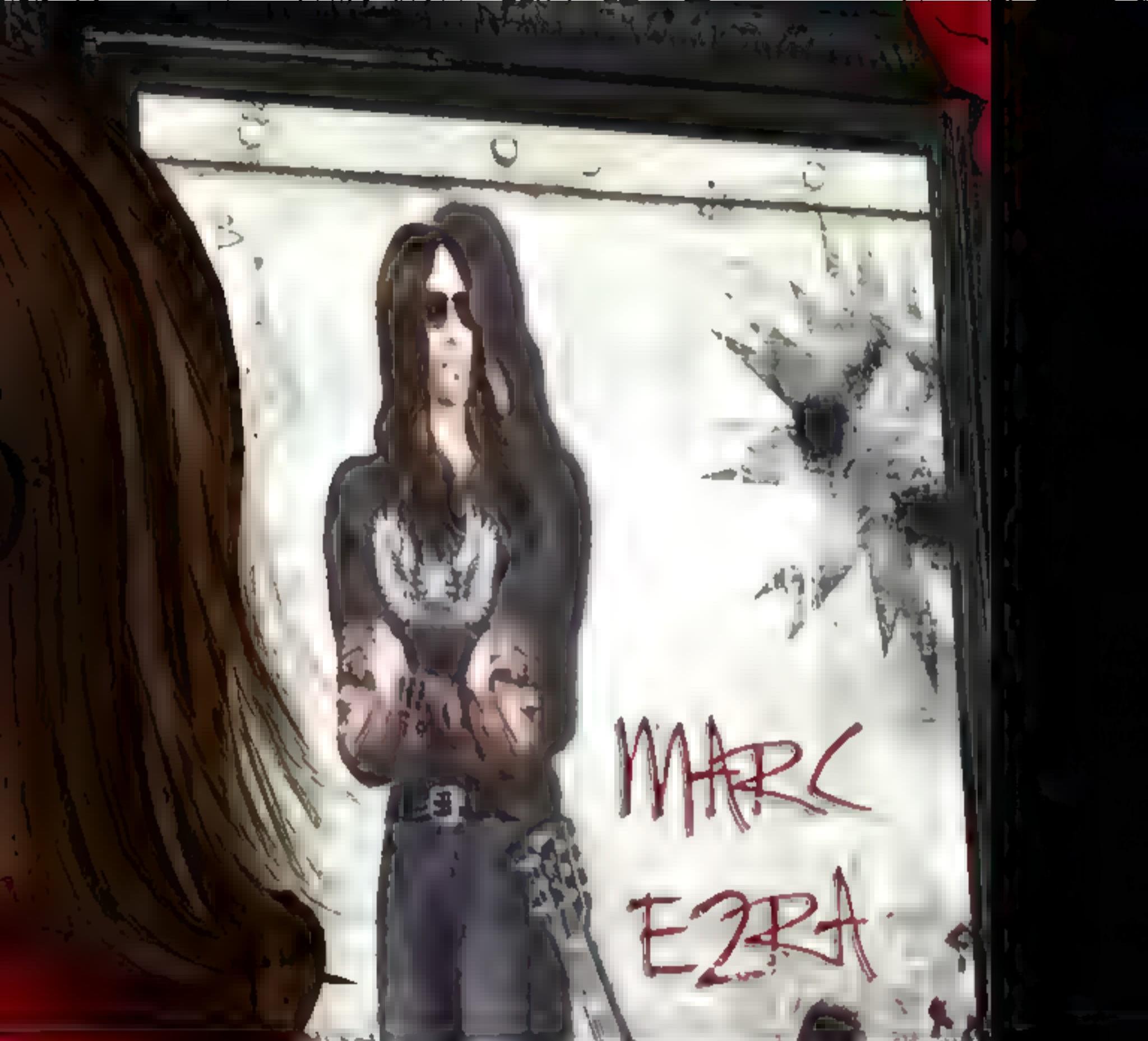
ME: Usually. I try to be as open-minded as possible in the creation process. It's all about the inspiration. Everything starts there. You find inspiration in whatever it is at the moment and you channel and refine it into something that captures yourself.

At the Paisley Park gig, Marc opened his set with an awesome original song entitled "Gone". It features a complex, almost-baroque opening segment on guitar, then segues into a very comfortable extended passage (think Mason Williams' "Classical Gas"). Ezra claims no formal, classical training whatsoever, which makes his guitar work all the more appealing to his exuberant group of fans. He's basically self-taught, but it's obvious that he grew up with that Taylor living in his hands. There's an ease and comfort in his playing, whether stating a backing theme or performing complex and blazing-fast double-picked lead passages.

The room was rapidly filling with Ezra fans and special guests who were invited to see him in one of his first SL performances. It was obvious that Marc held the crowd in his hand from the start, as he followed up "Gone" with another



guitar-based original called "Tarantula". This quick-step piece triggered a barrage of "Tarantula" gestures from the audience, a pleasant surprise for an artist so new and fresh on the scene. It made me appreciate even more the depth



of support work that Marc's management team - the gorgeous Alexxis Lefavre (who is the owner of Paisley Park, one of SL's super new music venues) and the equally-awesome Lizzy Nightfire. (By the way, this dynamic duo also

handles business and bookings for one of SL's premiere artists, Pilgrim75 Swashbuckler aka Pete Mroz, who was mentioned at the top of this article). By providing a new audience with a simple thing such as a gesture with a spider

image in it, the management team created a solidarity between artist and audience on the second song of the set. Great work, ladies!

The artist adroitly moved into yet another solid original that he calls “Goodbye”. It opens with a very dark, minor-key delivery that Ezra very much seems comfortable with. Lyrically, the track asks the important questions of self-reference that we all seem to share: Who am I? Why am I here? What’s the point of this existence? The tale rolls out in two distinct voices until the very effective galloping fast triplet bridge.

Ezra seems deeply rooted in mysterious, even dark minor key signatures and lyrics which are insightful and which at times can seem like escapees from a Poe volume.



TN: You define yourself as a storyteller.

ME: Yes, very much so.

TN: Your stories tend toward a dark mode. Is that a fair observation?

ME: Mos def. More than fair.

TN: Can you expand on that for the readers?

ME: It's input/output. It's the dark eras of my life that have been channeled into my fingers. I write about some very specific, and at once tragic stories. But all tragedy requires hope and redemption. So it allows me to share more emotions and how people convene on the journey

TN: Can you share one or two themes with us?

ME: Sure thing. The theme to SerehNIty And Peice dialogues a girl raped by tragedy, and the voices in her head are telling her something quite specific, while the angel in her heart is pulling for her redemption.

Another of my pieces, “The Haunting”, has a trio of voices,

where a man and a woman find themselves entangled in a terrible situation, while the third voice sort of narrates on the first two characters.

TN: *Marc, can you identify what it is that draws you to such themes of tragedy?*

ME: Wow. That's a powerful question.

TN: *smiles*

ME: It would have to be my life experiences. Watching my step dad die. Having my best friend die at a young age. I practically withered my personal life away a few years ago. I've written songs for these experiences, and more.

TN: *Thank you for sharing that. Is it helpful to address such life experiences through your writing?*

ME: It is. It doesn't make it hurt any less, but I feel I get my chance to speak my mind. It's not so much therapeutic, but more medicinal.

TN: *Do you experience any kind of catharsis from writing?*

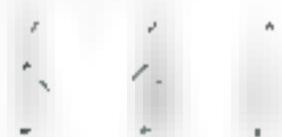
ME: Absolutely. I feel at ease.

Back at the venue, the crowd was heating up as Marc burst into "Everlong" from Foo Fighters. His vocal clarity and super-clear enunciation wooed the audience's attention away from a ridiculous griefer who seemingly came to the gig determined to suck all the fun out of the event. Fortunately, Lexi was up to the challenge and the fool was quickly dispatched. Too bad that brass knuckles are frowned upon in SL.

Next came an amazing version of his original entitled "Don't Have To Say Your Sorry." This one featured more super-clear audio, in which the bright top end of the guitar shimmered and glistened, shining up an otherwise sinister lyrical content. Of note was Marc's very fast flamenco-style pivot note guitar break.

He quickly morphed "Sorry" into a piece called "SarehNItY And Peice", which contains a

well-delivered hammer-on/pull-off solo and some intricate arpeggiated chord structures. It was a superb almost classical segment during which I began to note with a deep certainty that this young artist is, indeed, one of the more talented instrumentalists on the SL scene. His ability to fluidly insert a monster guitar break without breaking a sweat is a testimonial to those hours (weeks and months!) spent carrying the instrument 24/7.



TN: *Lets shift gears a bit. Your guitar work is stunning at some points in the concert act.*

ME: Thank you.

TN: *What's your guitar background?*

ME: Well my musical background is that I played piano from age six to eleven. At that point I pretty much dropped piano like a hot rock to go to guitar. I was just the nerdy kid who couldn't afford lessons,

and at a certain point just too proud to take them, so I would play and study hours every day.

TN: *Did you work in RL bands?*

ME: Yes. I've been in a few, but nothing that ever went anywhere. I don't think I've played in a band yet that I truly believe in. That's why my music means so much to me. I can say what I want.

TN: *How did you discover SL music?*

ME: My manager Alexxis Lefavre is my RL friend, so she told me about it. I've never done something like this, so she thought it would be a good fit.

TN: *Well, for playing such a short time in SL you are taking your concert audiences by storm. How does it feel compared to RL music gigs?*

ME: Why, thank you. Truly, I owe it all to Alexxis who has all the keys to all the doors. Thanks Lex! It's amazing. You definitely lose crowd interac-

tion because of the delay, but in all honesty people interact differently here. They pass out at shows, make funny gestures, etc. Or maybe I'm just tired of moving amps in RL. That's why I like it so much here. LOL

TN: *Marc, this is your opportunity to speak directly to your SL fans via the pages of rez Magazine. What would you like to say to them?*

ME: Thank you so much for sharing this journey. I might take you up, I might take you down, but I'll never take you to the same place.

TN: *We at rez are behind you 110% on this journey Marc. Thank you for a great interview.*

ME: Aww. I feel so loved! Thank you!!!

TN: *You are loved*



Paisley Park was past the point of no return; a great Saturday night crowd had appeared, most of them new fans



of both Marc Ezra and the venue. It was a lively bunch with lots of vibrant noise and conversation in the Open Chat windows. All night long I had been trying to come up with a point of reference for Marc's sound, despite Lao Tse's admonition, "Comparisons are odious." Then it hit me - the great Elvis Costello! I hear Costello in Ezra's vocal work, and I hear a bit of his unique, flowing arrangement in Marc's originals.

Marc closed down Paisley Park with a stunning version of Eddie Vedder's "Society". It was spot on, both capturing the original feel of the song while also adding his own musical taste to the mix. The audience went home happily satisfied, a sign that I always look for, especially when previewing a new SL artist. My prediction: Marc Ezra will become a mainstay on the SL live music scene. He will grow in originality, and he will make many,

many music lovers very happy with his craft. Get out and see this kid before the venues get too crowded for his gigs!

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Every woman deserves to be beautiful!



See the NEW Bella tu collection exclusive
on the Vintage Fair 2011. Bella tu - Beautiful You
Collection will be out at
December 4th 2011 in
the shops at Topaz Cove,
Serendipity Mall, Paris Eiffel,
New Toulouse, Berlin, Chicago!



1. A girl does not have to wait for puberty to obtain them.
2. Pixel boobs don't really need a bra: They never sag and always look perfect.
3. One can change the size of pixel boobs without expensive and invasive surgery.
4. I can make my pixel boobs stop jiggling at inappropriate moments with a simple adjustment of avatar physics.
5. Without really elaborate, and mutually agreed upon, animations, you will never get felt up in a crowded bar.
6. Nipple piercings, for those who are into such things, are painless, heal quickly, and leave no scars.
7. Pixel boobs don't swell and morph when one is virtually pregnant, and no one will be able to guilt you into breastfeeding if that isn't your thing.
8. I can sleep on my stomach in SL when I have virtual PMS and still be perfectly comfy.
9. I don't go for yearly mammograms, ultrasounds and MRIs in SL, and I still sleep well at night.

10. Most importantly, in SL I will never have to be among the one in 123 women who are diagnosed with breast cancer each year.

OK, in all seriousness, breasts can be sexy, but breast cancer sure as hell is not, and I have always been painfully aware of its specter hovering over my life from an early age, so bear with me.

In 1969, my godmother Jennie, my mother's sister, died of it. She was diagnosed in March and dead by the next April, after a barbaric double mastectomy and a lot of primitive radiation treatments. There simply was not a whole heck of a lot that could be done in those days. After Aunt Jennie died, I packed away all the toys she had given me, hiding them in the back of my closet, afraid I would get what she had by simply touching these things. After squirreling away the stuffed animals and dolls, I remember running to the little yellow bathroom downstairs and washing my hands 10 times with Ivory soap,

running the tap water at full blast to drown out the sound of my grandmother's sobs in the next room. I was four.

Fast forward to 1980, when I was in high school. My cousin Gloria was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer at age 26. Her child was 2 at the time. I was visiting her in the hospital when the doctor arrived to deliver the news of her diagnosis. After excusing myself from the room, I heard her reaction from the hallway, a scream that sounded something like a wounded animal caught in a steel trap. Gloria endured two ghastly years of chemo, miraculously never losing her hair or her spirit, and has since lived to hold two grandchildren. Unlike Aunt Jennie, she was among the lucky ones.

Moreover, at any given time in the last 10 years, I have known at least two, at times more, women dealing with breast cancer. As I write this, I think of my best friend in SL, newly diagnosed, and then my

RL neighbor Gail, who has fought bravely for close to 10 years. I see her a few days a week, in her wheelchair, thin and drawn, head wrapped in a bright turban, her-nurse pushing her to watch the

sun set over the beach by our homes. Both are memento moris. “There, but for the grace of God, go I,” I say quietly to myself, echoing an old saying of Mummy’s.

My own mother, years later, always said that her greatest hope after her sister died was to see me grow up. Now that I am a parent, I understand completely. I found my first lump when I was 32, my son just 6 months old. It, fortunately, was nothing, but each year since then, I make my way to the radiology center, and then to a follow-up appointment with a specialist, and feel that I am buying time. My body has become a flesh revolver drawn against itself, with a bullet cocked in the chamber ready to go off.

Mammograms stopped being sufficient for me years ago, as did ultrasounds. Something called fibrocystic tissue, but the terminology really means nothing to me. I fight annual battles with the insurance company to pay for an MRI, the one test that will give me my life and sanity back for an-

other year. “Not medically necessary,” the insurance pundits say. “Bullshit,” say I.

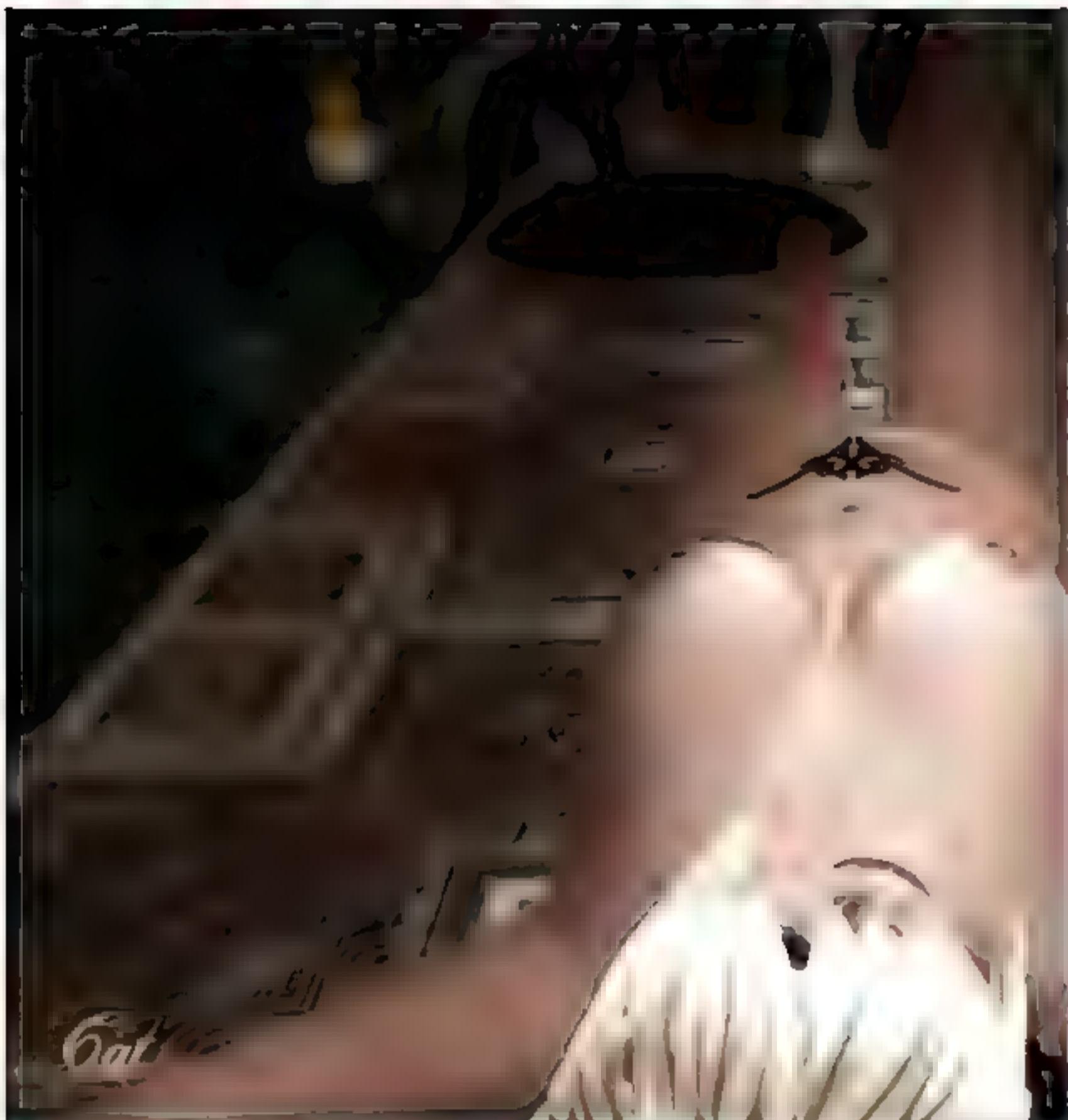
I won’t try to politicize about the hopelessly broken state of the U.S. healthcare system, or even about the many debates surrounding cancer research funding. Leave that to those who know more than I.

All I know is this. It’s not just a personal thing for me; breast cancer is every woman’s issue. As such, it is every child’s issue, and it is a man’s issue. At some point, we all wrestle with the anxiety and uncertainty that swirls around our yearly examinations. I have seen breast cancer change lives, take lives, and destroy the lives of those left behind. While the hard costs of prevention and treatment are one thing, the emotional detritus this disease leaves in its wake is far more significant.

Maybe this is why I like my pixel boobs. Not only are they perfect; they are perfectly safe.

rez

TIME MACHINE



CAT BOCCACCIO

2007

An Interview



CAT'S BEACH GALLERY

<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Zebrane%20Island/94/30/22>

Plan B

The Cancer on All of Us

Deningun Parte

Last time I rambled here, I said most of us who commit to SL are for some reason impaired in RL. And today I will look under one of those rocks a little - just a little. It's not pleasant, because I talk of cancer. Just taking stock of my SL friends reveals a few unpleasant truths. I lost one old friend to cancer, even if cancer may not have been the proximate cause of her death. One other friend struggled with it for five years of her SL, and has won the battle, for now. One has breast cancer and will have surgery soon. And these are only the ones close to me that I can recall without reaching too far into my memory. If cancer is frequent in RL, it's certainly more frequent in SL. And so, with Breast Cancer Awareness Month just passed, we should speak of it. I lost loved ones in both worlds to cancer, and even if I personally do not have it (yet), it certainly touched and changed my life. And not for the better. The same is true of all of us, or it will be.

I did my research, because I am used to it. I checked the numbers from the Centers for Disease Control, and they bear out my personal experience. In 2010, there were 14 million Americans with cancer, among them 1 million newly diagnosed. On a scale that is easier to grasp for your personal lives, that is about one in 20 people. Look at your friends list, remember that the proportion of people with cancer in SL is probably higher than in RL, and draw your conclusions. Cancer is in your life. Like, well...a cancer.

Now, what do we do with this knowledge? Fundraising is an obvious answer, but in the face of cancer, I have my doubts. I hold a Ph.D. in the life sciences, and I have created research budgets, run studies, and studied scientific literature. Even though I do not often stop to think of it, I know what scientific knowledge costs in dollars and cents. So, let's have a look. I searched for the term 'cancer' in pub med, the database for medical literature by the National Institutes of Health. I got 2,567,578 hits. Some of these will be clinical studies, some will be basic science, some will be reviews. In basic science, a quarter million dollars will fund a small university lab for five years. It will go towards the salaries for two or three people, lets say two scientists and a technician, and some equipment and supplies. In return, each of the scientists will produce results for about one publication per year, if all goes well. So, the quarter million dollars pays for about 10 of those two and a half million things I found on pub med. None of these will be huge breakthrough. If they are good science, they will be one more piece in the hugely complex puzzle of cancer research. An expert in the field can read one of those publications in an hour and completely understand what a year's worth of work has accomplished. If someone means to, they can go through the entire research output that a quarter million paid for in a day. And no, what was found there will not be the cure to cancer. Just a small step on the way.

Now for clinical research: The government funds some, the pharmaceutical industry funds some, and private foundations fund some more. Your normal clinical trial, the kind that decides if a medication makes it to market or not, involves hundreds or thousands of patients, depending how marked the treatment effects are expected to be. They are run at many hospitals simultaneously, often 40 or 50 in several countries. Hundreds of people can be involved in running

the study, and the trials can last several years. I'm not even going to attempt to come up with an estimate of the cost. But one such trial is clearly worth many millions. And again, it produces a small piece of the puzzle, no more. We need many of these. So, the times when medical knowledge was easily won are over, the low-hanging fruit has long been picked. Today, we pay a lot for what we learn.

I remember the story of Jonas Salk and the polio vaccine. A lot of his funding came from the March of Dimes. The people paid for the polio vaccine with their spare change. I wonder if that is even still possible today - but probably not. I'm not going to advance any opinion on where the money should come from. But a lot of it is needed. So even if you gave US\$1,000 of your money, it would not be a drop in the bucket.

With that, I have two thoughts, agree with me or not. The first is about money. If we need so much money for research, what do we spend it on? Do we spend our money on the diseases that affect the most people, figuring that that will save the most lives? Is that selling the people with rarer diseases down the river? Where does one concentrate effort? Should we spend it on the most lethal diseases, maybe? I will tell you this much: This January, there was an article in the Annals of The Royal College of Surgeons of England that concluded that popular media were covering some types of cancer more than would be expected by the number of people that have them, and others less. The "popular" cancers were breast, kidney and stomach cancers, the "unpopular" ones were colorectal, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, bladder and oesophageal cancers. I'll just state the facts, and advise you that my friends Jullianna Juliesse and Rodolpho Teardrop have strong opinions on them. When you are done reading this here, turn the page, please, and see their thoughts.

My second thought is that money is needed, but there are other things each of us can do. Basic human kindness is one of them. To sit and listen, to bring over a casserole, to rake leaves. Or to take someone out in SL to watch a show or dance, maybe. It costs your time, effort and many tears if the worst happens - and eventually it will in many cases. But please do it anyway.



<http://www.cancer.org>

The Girl Opines

As if One of Me Wasn't Enough

Jullianna Juliesse!!!!

“Paging Dr. Freud!”

So, after more than three years, it was bound to happen—the alt thing, I mean.

Well, all of my friends here have one—or more—alternative personas, characters they can instantly inhabit with a simple click and relog. Some are characters used for roleplay or business endeavors; others are truly inspired works of genius. One male friend, who shall remain nameless to protect the not-so-innocent, created an angry overweight female alt with a penchant for dressing in peacock feather capes—a twisted hybrid of Liberace and the Furies, hell-bent on tormenting those who had done me wrong. (And yes, he is straight; hence lies the brilliance.)

For ages though, I resisted the temptation to create one of my own. One of me was plenty it seemed. After all, it took so much time, effort, expense, and energy just to get this girl to where you see her today. The skin, the hair, the animation overrider, the clothing—not to mention nurturing an in-world persona, so that this new creature wouldn’t just lumber about idly saying things like “cool” and “neat” while wandering aimlessly from one dance club to another.

Moreover, I was concerned that any alt I created would in essence be an extension of myself, a fragmentation of my person. It all seemed to be almost a manufactured form of schizophrenia.

However, the demon seed was planted when I was banned from the 1920s Berlin sim. The woman who ran the show there—a mirthless, angry control freak—gave me “das boot” for what she felt was a violation of her dress code rules. Whatever. I still had a couple of friends worth seeing, so what’s a girl to do? Create an alt of course!

It all seemed to be almost a manufactured form of schizophrenia.

That first one was a little rough. She never looked quite right in her hand-me-down clothing, and stumbled awkwardly through the world. I never felt comfortable in her pixel skin, and always had the urge to go back to being “me.” It wasn’t all bad though. I trotted her out in Berlin, where she attended a spring fete and a fancy dress ball, and let her wander the streets in relative anonymity. Over time, I engineered a fun roleplay where the alt developed a crush on my main persona, which led to her stalking me in my old haunts, pining away with unreciprocated love. However, sad to say, Alt #1 got banned not only from the Berlin sim, but from the convent sim in which Miss Julie lived prior to her liberation (for more info, IM me for a previous article; it’s all public record at this point).

It might just be me, but it seems that I have a certain knack for getting banned from places. So, I took a step back from the whole situation, alt and non-alt, to examine things. The first thing I realized, at least

for me, is that being an alt is tough work. Most people (peacock feather friend excluded) tend to create their alts as somewhat of an extension of themselves, or at least their main SL personas. I look at my alts, and at those of my friends, and see that they have a strange, vague resemblance to one another, rather like distant cousins. There are physical similarities, but there are also the same basic underpinnings of personality.



So I gave it one last whirl, for the purposes of researching this month's rant. My hypothesis: Would it be easier this time? It was, I am happy to report. I created a lovely creature: so kind, so sweet, so lovely, and a redhead to boot! What was most refreshing about Alt #2 was her utter lack of historicity. She flew forth into the world, fully formed, a day old, with all my knowledge and none of my baggage. She didn't have to learn any of the things it took me more than three years to master, and was instantly a force with which to be reckoned.

Hypothesis #2: Would she be recognized?

OK, so I broke down and sent her to 1920s Berlin to test this theory. Well, apparently my baggage somehow traveled along with her. Without saying a whole heck of a lot, it was only a matter of time before some of the harpies in Berlin suspected she was an alt (I suppose she was a little too fully formed for a 2-day old) and subsequently attempted to out me. Still, they had nothing concrete with which to work. It was only when I rented a dumpy flat and plunked a few things in said hellhole that the proverbial manure went flying.

It might just be me, but it seems that I have a certain knack for getting **banned** from places.

The sim police broke into my flat, inspected my meager possessions, and saw the original owner was none but yours truly.

Busted!

In the end, I suppose I am what our esteemed Editor in Chief calls an Augmentalist: That is, SL will always be an extension of my real life, rather than an escape from, or alternative to, it. Any effort to do anything else, at least for me, will always be futile in the end.

And so, dear reader, I got banned. Again.

Dear Sophie,



Story by **Jami Mills**
Illustration by **Cat Boccaccio**

I prefer typing on this old manual. It appeals to my romantic nature. Even a couple of keys stick -- perfect. A stack of unopened letters sits on top of my chaotic desk. A sheaf of bond, some stray cigarette butts and an empty shot glass. The sounds of the city mingle with the strains of Mingus's hard bop on the phonograph. Yeah, I got one of them too. It's too hot to think straight, and even at midnight, the open window of this one room walkup provides no relief. The air is heavy and still. I pour a shot of Bushmills and open the first letter.

Dear Sophie: I think I'm going crazy and I don't know where to turn anymore. I've lived with my boyfriend for over six months now and I thought everything was okay, but lately he seems more and more distant. Last night he came home with long scratches on his back and I'm pretty sure I smelled perfume. What should I do? I can't lose him. Crazy in Camden

Here we go again. As I feed a fresh sheet into my Underwood, I hear sirens wailing. I know what I'd do, I think to myself.

Dear Crazy: The healthiest relationships depend on communication. Be brave and confront your fears head-on. Before you jump to conclusions, there may be an innocent explanation. Ask him where he got those scratches. Men aren't that hard to read. If you caught him, you'll know.

Sophie

Her entire love life summed up in one paragraph. She got what she paid for, I think. I slam the shot and walk over to change the music. Monk, you're up. I love the hisses and pops of real records. Like the sounds of clinking glasses and the low murmur of the crowd at a live recording at the Vanguard. Authenticity. That's what I like. Isn't anything authentic anymore? If he's cheating on you, throw the bastard out on the street. Are you that

feeble? I light a cigarette and pour another shot, opening the next letter.

Dear Sophie: I love my husband, I really do. He's just about perfect in every way -- a good provider, a good father to our new baby. We have a good sex life, too. But sometimes my mind wanders, and I have these wild fantasies about my co-worker. Here's the problem -- she's a woman. Am I gay? Confused in Cincinnati

Oh, for the love of God. What's wrong with you? Haven't girl kisses made it to the Heartland yet? I remember mine -- Mary Ann in the dark anonymous recesses of a local joint. Came right up to me and pinned me against the paneled wall. Whispered into my ear, "Sophie, you're about to get kissed." It's hard for me to remember anything more erotic since. Confused, you should be so lucky.

Dear Confused: Sexual fantasies are natural and common. It's whether you act on them that matters. From the sound of it, you have a lovely, stable home life. Forget about your co-worker and concentrate on what's real to you...your loving family. Maybe you ARE gay, but that's beside the point. Sophie

I slowly slide my fingers up under my top. My heart races, just like it did when Mary Ann slid her hands up my sides and over my ribs. Only I was frozen in fear then, unable to move as her hands kept going. Where are you when I need you? I spill some whisky on the unpaid bills scattered about. I rip open the next letter, tearing a corner.

Dear Sophie: I cheated on my husband last week while I was on a business trip. It was meaningless sex, kind of like room service (only I didn't have to pay). It doesn't make me love my husband any less -- it was a one-time thing, just a little thrill. Is there something so

*wrong with that? Should I tell my husband or just keep it to myself?
Frisky in Frisco*

Why is she asking me these stupid questions? She wants to break up her nice marriage? Is she crazy? I stumble over to the phonograph and scratch the needle across the vinyl. I feel like something moody now. Where's Chet when I need him? I fumble through a stack of albums and pull out My Funny Valentine. It skips, but I don't care. I put another sheet of paper in the typewriter and hammer out my reply.

Dear Frisky: You ignorant slut. Please don't have children. The sooner your genetic strand ends, the better. That's not cheating, you imbecile. You're saving your life. The sex wasn't meaningless -- your LIFE is meaningless. Sophie

I've got to stop doing this. I take a pull from the bottle. Don't change a hair for me....not if you care for me... I lean back in my

chair and shut my eyes. My fingers fumble for the tie strings of my sweats, pulling the knot open. What exactly is meaningless sex, anyway? I've really got to stop doing this. I feed another sheet into my machine and begin typing.

Dear Sophie: Isn't there anything more to life than answering the desperate meanderings of the love-lorn? Is this all there is? Really? Sophie

Even my thoughts are slurring now. Mary Ann, why did you unbutton my shirt when you knew I wouldn't stop you? You created this emptiness. When you slipped my jeans over my hips, you knew I couldn't stop you. Stay little Valentine, stay... What do I do now? Well? I bang on the keys, pulling them apart when they mangle together.

Dear Sophie: Go fuck yourself.



Sigare

KC

ronda saunders

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Red Rodeo featuring onda saunders



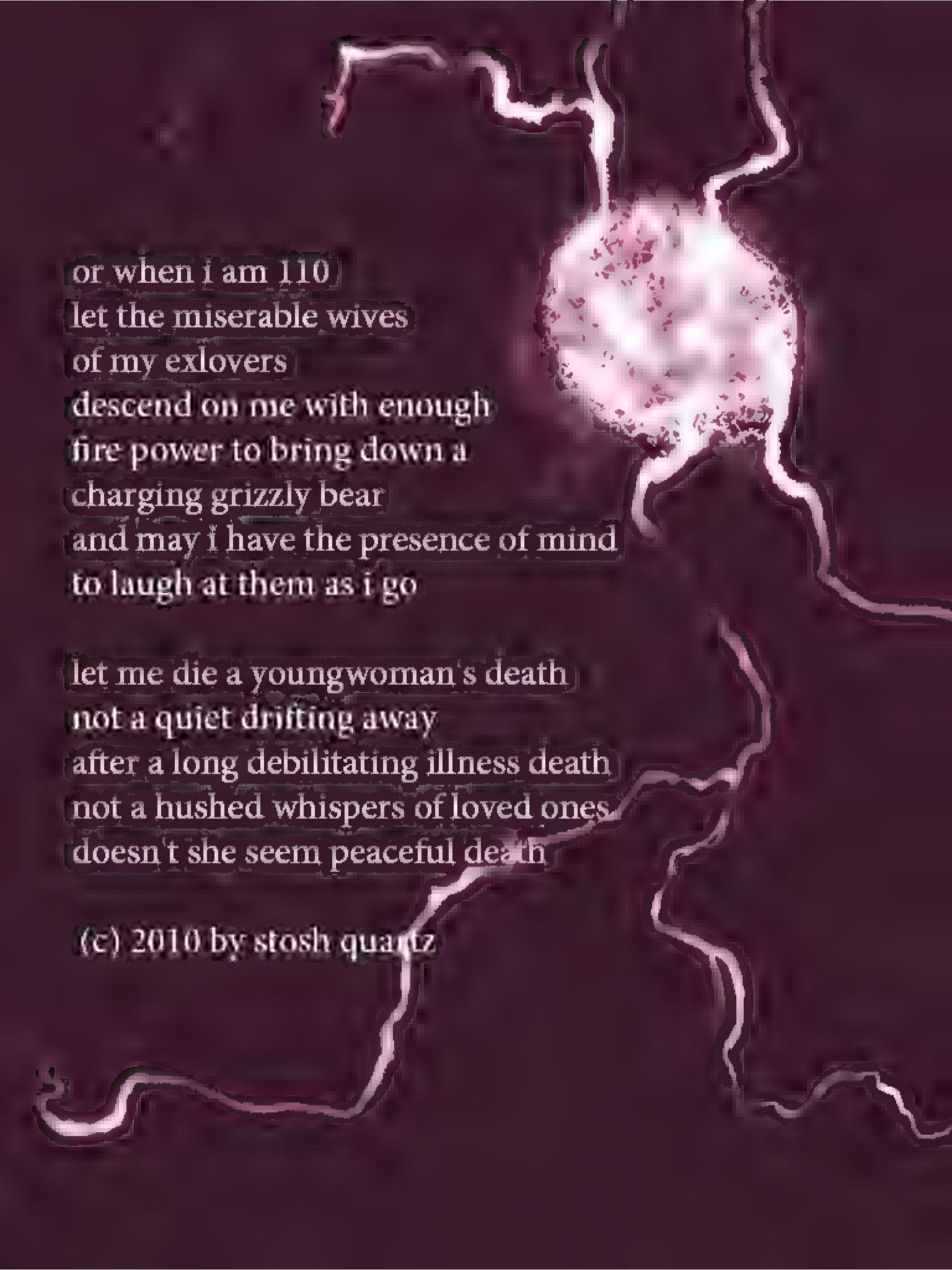
Gallerie 17

Let Me Die a Youngwoman's Death

let me die a youngwoman's death
not a nurses hovering
heart monitor beeping
sanitary hospital death

when i am 82
and still wearing miniskirts and spandex
let my body collapse after a night of
booze, cocaine, dancing
and wild lovemaking
with two men a quarter my age

or when i'm 97
strolling on the greens
at St. Andrews
carrying my own clubs
on a perfectly clear day
may i be struck by ball lightning
that has never occurred in that
location before



or when i am 110
let the miserable wives
of my exlovers
descend on me with enough
fire power to bring down a
charging grizzly bear
and may i have the presence of mind
to laugh at them as i go

let me die a youngwoman's death
not a quiet drifting away
after a long debilitating illness death
not a hushed whispers of loved ones
doesn't she seem peaceful death

(c) 2010 by stosh quartz

Unwrap Me

can i tell you something?
it's important so i will whisper
pay attention

i want you to
unwrap me slowly

tug gently at the bow
that keeps the paper snug around me
slip your fingers into the wrapper
loosening the tape gently
so it does not tear the fibers
unwrap me slowly

unfold it, smoothing
the creases
almost there

giving my secrets up to you
please

unwrap me slowly
your hands on me
unwrap me slowly

your eyes on mine
finding my hidden layers
the things i reveal
only to you

this package contains
secret compartments
that require
a sensitive touch
so please
unwrap me
unwrap me
slowly

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